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IN THE CLAIMS

Cancel claims 1-69.

Add new claims 70-97 as follows:

1-69. (Canceled)

70. (New) A method of a server downloading data via a client-server communications network, the method comprising:
receiving a request for data from a client;
determining if the request for data can be fulfilled within a predetermined target period; and
sending to the client a proxy list comprising an address of at least one proxy server client which stores requested data in a local cache if the request for data is unable to be fulfilled within the predetermined target period.

71. (New) A method according to claim 70, wherein the predetermined target period is variable.

72. (New) A method according to claim 71, wherein the predetermined target period varies as a function of a client-server connection speed.

73. (New) A method according to claim 72, wherein the predetermined target period is shortened when the client-server connection speed is relatively fast and lengthened when the client-server connection speed is relatively slow.

74. (New) A method according to claim 70, further comprising maintaining a look-up table which correlates items of data with addresses of one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached.

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75. (New) A method according to claim 74, further comprising:
receiving cache status change reports from the one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached; and
updating the look-up table using the cache status change reports.
76. (New) A method according to claim 74, further comprising:
assessing connection speeds to the one or more proxy server clients whose addresses are contained in the look-up table; and
discarding or demoting the addresses of proxy server clients having relatively slow connection speeds.
77. (New) A method according to claim 70, further comprising:
receiving an address of a proxy server client that provided requested data; and
assembling an address list of proxy server clients most commonly accessed to obtain requested data.
78. (New) A method according to claim 70, wherein the proxy list comprises addresses of proxy server clients whose workload is below a workload limit.
79. (New) A method according to claim 70, wherein the network comprises the Internet, the at least one proxy server client comprises a user terminal running a web browser, and the respective local cache is associated with the web browser on the user terminal.
80. (New) A client-server communications network comprising:
a plurality of clients, each client including a local cache for storing data downloaded via the network; and
a server including means for receiving a request for data from a client, means for determining if the request for data can be fulfilled within a predetermined target period, and means for sending to the client a proxy list comprising an address of at least one proxy

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server client which stores requested data in a local cache if the request for data is unable to be fulfilled within the predetermined target period.

81. (New) A network according to claim 80, wherein the predetermined target period is variable.

82. (New) A network according to claim 81, wherein the server includes means for sensing a client-server connection speed, and means for varying the predetermined target period based upon the client-server connection speed.

83. (New) A network according to claim 80, wherein the server includes means for maintaining a look-up table which correlates items of data with addresses of one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached.

84. (New) A network according to claim 83, wherein the server includes means for receiving cache status change reports from the one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached, and means for updating the look-up table using the cache status change reports.

85. (New) A network according to claim 83, wherein the server includes means for assessing connection speeds to the one or more proxy server clients whose addresses are contained in the look-up table, and means for discarding or demoting the addresses of proxy server clients having relatively slow connection speeds.

86. (New) A network according to claim 80, wherein the server includes means for receiving an address of a proxy server client that provided requested data, and means for assembling an address list of proxy server clients most commonly accessed to obtain requested data.

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87. (New) A network according to claim 80, wherein the proxy list comprises addresses of proxy server clients whose workload is below a workload limit.

88. (New) A network according to claim 80, wherein the network comprises the Internet, the plurality of clients comprise user terminals running web browsers, and the respective local caches are associated with the browsers on the user terminals.

89. (New) A server for a client-server communications network, the server comprising:

means for receiving a request for data from a client;

means for determining if the request for data can be fulfilled within a predetermined target period; and

means for sending to the client a proxy list comprising an address of at least one proxy server client which stores requested data in a local cache if the request for data is unable to be fulfilled within the predetermined target period.

90. (New) A server according to claim 89, wherein the predetermined target period is variable.

91. (New) A server according to claim 90, further comprising:

means for sensing a client-server connection speed; and

means for varying the predetermined target period based upon the client-server connection speed.

92. (New) A server according to claim 89, further comprising means for maintaining a look-up table which correlates items of data with addresses of one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached.

93. (New) A server according to claim 92, further comprising:

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means for receiving cache status change reports from the one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached; and

means for updating the look-up table using the cache status change reports.

94. (New) A server according to claim 92, further comprising:

means for assessing connection speeds to the one or more proxy server clients whose addresses are contained in the look-up table; and

means for discarding or demoting the addresses of proxy server clients having relatively slow connection speeds.

95. (New) A server according to claim 89, further comprising:

means for receiving an address of a proxy server client that provided requested data; and

means for assembling an address list of proxy server clients most commonly accessed to obtain requested data.

96. (New) A server according to claim 89, wherein the proxy list comprises addresses of proxy server clients whose workload is below a workload limit.

97. (New) A server according to claim 89, wherein the network comprises the Internet.